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ABSTRACT

Suggesting that writing can play an integral part in the learning process, this ERIC "FAST Bib" provides annotations of 31 ERIC documents and journal articles published between 1987 and 1992 concerning the Writing to Learn movement. The citations in the first section of the FAST Bib present an overview of the theories and criticisms of writing to learn. The second section contains concrete examples of the uses of Writing to Learn in the classroom: examples include uses in social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts. (RS)

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WRITING TO LEARN

by Michael Denner

Writing *can* play an integral part in the learning process. When a student picks up a pen and begins to write about any subject, he or she takes an active role in education. Furthermore, when writing is used at an early stage of the learning process—rather than only later as a test or product for evaluation—both teacher and student can discern not only how well the student understands but something about his/her thinking process. Writing then becomes an important tool for learning.

This ERIC *Fast Bib* provides references concerning the "Writing to Learn" movement in today's schools. The first section presents an overview of the theories and criticisms of Writing to Learn. The second section contains concrete examples of the uses of Writing to Learn in the classroom. Examples include uses in several areas of study.

Two types of citations are provided in this bibliography: ERIC documents and journal articles.

Citations of ERIC documents

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Overview

Benson, Barbara P. "Effective Tests: Let Them Write!" *English Journal*, v80 n2 p74-79 Feb 1991.

Outlines the importance of essay tests as a method of learning and discovery. Suggests ways of helping students approach essay questions, how to determine what information is necessary for a complete answer, and how to fulfill those requirements.

Cronin, C. H. and others. "Follow the 'Map' to Sharp Thinking and Writing Skills," *Executive Educator* v12 n7 p17-19 Jul 1990.

The Moss Point, Mississippi, school district uses a semantic mapping teaching approach called "Writing to Learn" that visually and graphically displays ideas and concepts. Students use computers to work on writing projects, and their achievement scores on the state's reading and writing examinations have increased remarkably. Outlines elements of the approach.

Fulwiler, Toby. *Teaching with Writing*. Boyon/Cook, Inc., P.O. Box 860, 52 Upper Montclair Plaza, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043. 1987. Hard copy not available from EDRS. [ED 277 021]

Provides an overview of the current state of writing instruction at the secondary and college levels. Each chapter deals with an aspect or methodology for teaching, giving practical ideas for using writing.

Johannessen, Larry R. and Kahn, Elizabeth A. "Writing across the Curriculum." Paper presented at Teachers' Institute, 1991. 63 p. [ED 336 762]

Argues that the best approach to writing across the curriculum focuses on strategies that cut across a number of subjects. The paper describes some methods found to be successful in teaching students how to make and support generalizations, producing arguments and creating extended definitions.

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Johnson, Julie M. and others. "An Examination of the Use of the Writing Process in Home Economics Using Qualitative and Quantitative Methods." Paper presented at the American Vocational Association Convention, 1990. 26 p. [ED 329 729]

Describes a study of home economics teachers' use of writing in secondary programs. Three dominant themes for the inclusion of the writing process emerged: using writing as a vehicle for students to learn subject matter and make connections between concepts; improving a student's self-concept; and varying the methods of instruction.

Kelly, Dawn and Smith, Carl. "Writing across the Curriculum: Learning Package No. 50." Available from ERIC/RCS Clearinghouse, Indiana University, 2805 E. Tenth St., Bloomington, IN 47408-2698. $7.95 plus $3.00 shipping/handling. [ED 333 416]

Designed for teachers who wish to upgrade or expand their teaching skills on their own or to present a workshop. The package includes a comprehensive search of the ERIC database; a lecture giving an overview of the topic; copies of selected publications on the topic; and a set of guidelines for completing a goal statement, a reaction paper, and an application project.

McGinley, William and Tierney, Robert J. "Traversing the Topical Landscape: Reading and Writing as Ways of Knowing," *Written Communication*, v6 n3 p243-69 Jul 1989.

Proposes a view of literacy learning in which various forms of reading and writing are conceptualized as unique ways of thinking about and exploring a topic of study en route to acquiring knowledge.

Sensenbaugh, Roger. "Process Writing in the Classroom," *Journal of Reading*, v33 n5 p382-83 Feb 1990.

Argues that if writing is to help students learn, the purpose for which the writing is assigned has to change. Describes the process approach to writing for use in the classroom.

Sorenson, Sharon. "Encouraging Writing Achievement: Writing across the Curriculum." ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Bloomington, IN 47408-2698. 1991. 3 p. [ED 327 879]

Discusses how across-the-curriculum writing finds its merit in removing students from their passivity. When content-area teachers incorporate writing in all areas of the curriculum, students benefit in three ways: (1) they have a resource for better understanding content; (2) they practice a technique which aids retention; and (3) they begin to write better.

Walter, James F. "Reading, the Imagination, and Writing," *ADE Bulletin*, No. 86, Spring 1987, p29-33.

Advocates making instruction in the critical reading of literature the foundation of an integrated literature and writing curriculum.

Writing-to-Learn Programs

Adams, Richard C. "Writing in Science: It's All in How You Say It," *Writing Notebook: Creative Word Processing in the Classroom*, v7 n4 p33 Apr-May 1990.

Describes ways to increase students' writing and communication skills in high school chemistry and physics classes: terms papers in chemistry, shorter papers on fascinating physics questions, and oral presentation of the results.

Ammon, Paul and Ammon, Mary Sue. "Using Student Writing to Assess and Promote Understanding in Science." Occasional Paper No. 16. Center for the Study of Writing, Berkeley, CA and the Center for the Study of Writing, Pittsburgh, PA, 1990. 11 p. [ED 316 864]

Promotes writing as a rich source of information for science teachers. The responses students give when asked to explain in writing what happened in an experiment can help the teacher address particular students' misunderstandings. Using writing in this way can enhance teachers' understandings of their students and enhance students' understandings of science.

Beemer, Mary and Grippando, Linda. "Early Writing," *Executive Educator*, v14 n2 p36-38 Feb 1992.

Recommends establishing an early writing program in kindergarten with children dictating a story that a teacher or parent volunteer records on paper. Additional ways are suggested to infuse writing activities into every subject in a child's schooling.

Brutlag, Dan. "Making Connections: Beyond the Surface," *Mathematics Teacher*, v85 n3 p230-35 Mar 1992

Pesents an integrated curriculum geometry unit, "Beyond the Surface," built around four principles promoting students' mental connections. The principles include a significant problem context, assignment of concrete active tasks, employing tools embodying the mathematical concept, and reflection

on established connections through writing, discussions, and projects.

Cordeiro, Patricia. "Playing with Infinity in the Sixth Grade," *Language Arts* v65 n6 p557-66 Oct 1988.

Describes how a sixth-grade teacher and her eleven students (with a typical range of math abilities) explored the mathematical concept of infinity through play. Discusses the pedagogy of critical/creative thinking.

Cronin, Hines and others. "Integrating Computers, Reading, and Writing across the Curriculum," *Educational Leadership*, v48 n1 p57-62 Sep 1990.

In 1987, as a vehicle for improving student performance, Moss Point (Mississippi) Schools embraced semantic and cognitive mapping. Using highly structured computer programs, students learn to construct visual maps representing the relationships of major ideas, subordinate ideas, and explicit information.

Elegreet-DeSalvo, Nora and Levitsky, Ronald. "We Left Our Homeland, A Sad, Sad, Day: An Interdisciplinary Approach," *English Journal*, v78 n6 p62-65 Oct 1989.

Describes an interdisciplinary unit combining eighth-grade language arts and U.S. history, based on the study of the immigrant experience and involving writing across the curriculum and role-playing.

Ford, Margaret I. "The Writing Process: A Strategy for Problem Solvers," *Arithmetic Teacher*, v38 n3 p35-38 Nov 1990. [

Describes a strategy where students write stories to help in the process of solving problems. The strategy is a five-step process which includes prewriting, writing, conferencing, revising and editing, and publishing.

Heacock, Grace Anne. "The We-Search Process: Using the Whole Language Model of Writing to Learn Social Studies Content and Civic Competence," *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, v2 n3 p9-11 Jan-Feb 1990.

Demonstrates teaching citizenship through student involvement in current issues. Presents We-Search—a process using the whole-language approach for group research projects in a Fairbanks, Alaska, third grade class. Highlights class projects, including one concerning transportation of plutonium across international borders. Emphasizes how We-Search fosters civic competence.

Havens, Lynn. "Writing to Enhance Learning in General Mathematics," *Mathematics Teacher*, v82 n7 p155-54 Oct 1989.

Discusses the use of writing assignments in the mathematics class. Provides a peer conference checklist and samples of the students' work. Describes some of the experiences, types of assignments, and grading.

McGehe, Carol A. "Mathematics the Write Way," *Instructor*, v100 n8 p36-38 Apr 1992.

Incorporates writing into everyday math activities to help elementary students become better communicators and learn to express themselves with more confidence and clarity. An elementary teacher presents several successful writing activities from her math classroom.

McIntosh, Margaret. "No Time for Writing in Your Class?" *Mathematics Teacher*, v84 n6 p423-33 Sep 1991.

Integrating writing into the mathematics classroom is often met with resistance by teachers. Presents ideas to help teachers implement four forms of writing appropriate for the mathematics class: (1) logbooks, (2) journals, (3) expository writing, and (4) creative writing. Provides specific examples and suggestions for classroom activities.

Mett, Coreen L. "Writing in Mathematics: Evidence of Learning through Writing," *Clearing House*, v62 n7 p293-96 Mar 1989.

Discusses how recently developed techniques of writing across the curriculum can enhance the literacy of mathematics students. Supplies samples of students' journal entries to illustrate how writing helps students understand math concepts and terminology.

Miller, Diane L. "Writing to Learn Mathematics," *Mathematics Teacher*, v84 n7 p516-21 Oct 1991.

Presents a description of how the NCTM Standard, "Mathematics as Communication," can be addressed using a learn-to-write strategy. Suggests responses to the questions of why writing about mathematics can improve learning and how this approach can be implemented in the classroom.

Miller, Diane L. and England, David A. "Writing to Learn Algebra," *School Science and Mathematics*, v89 n4 p299-312 Apr 1989.

Describes a study in a large metropolitan high school to ascertain what influence the use of regular writing in algebra classes would have. Reports that simpler and more direct writing topics are better.

Nugent, Susan Monroe and Nugent, Harold E. "Learning through Writing: The Double-Entry

Journal in Literature Classes (Theory into Practice)," *English-Quarterly*, v21 n4 p258-63 1989.

Describes the double-entry journal and its theoretical underpinnings as an approach to learning through writing. Involves reading literature, sharing responses in small groups, participating in class presentations, and synthesizing these findings in a second journal entry.

Parmigiani, Rosemary. "The Wonders of Publishing in the Classroom," *Media and Methods*, v28 n22 p44-45 Nov-Dec 1991.

Describes the writing center funded for the Bristol (Pennsylvania) High School when the school district adopted writing across the curriculum. Gives examples of ways in which the center is used and both student and teacher reactions to these activities. Provides information on six desktop publishing programs.

Piper, Judy. "Classroom Writing Activities to Support the Curriculum," *Writing Notebook: Creative Word Processing in the Classroom*, v9 n2 p28 Nov-Dec 1991.

Offers three writing activities in the areas of language arts, life science, and visual arts.

Schneider, Dean. "Teaching Writing in Middle School: Using Meredith Sue Willis's 'Blazing Pencils' and 'Personal Fiction Writing,'" *Teachers and Writers* v23 n4 p7-9 Mar-Apr 1992.

Describes the uses of two texts for teaching the intermediate and secondary grade levels. Relates how the texts encourage students to write about their own experiences in vivid detail and discover the value of reading their work aloud to build awareness of their writing voice.

Voss, Margaret M. "The Light at the End of the Journal: A Teacher Learns about Learning," *Language Arts*, v65 n7 p669-74 Nov 1988.

Relates what the author learned about learning through journal writing. Her conclusions include strategies to make order from confusion, ways to connect one's learning to the rest of one's life, and ways to become aware not only of what we learn, but how we learn, both alone and together.

Walley, Carl W. "Diaries, Logs and Journals in the Elementary Classroom," *Childhood Education*, v67 n3 p149-54 Spr 1991.

Discusses three types of journals: (1) writer's journals, which encourage recording of events for later literary work; (2) learning logs, which encourage interaction with curriculum content; and (3) diaries, which allow free flow of emotions and ideas. For each type, student samples and teacher comments are provided.

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